ADRIAN CITY COMMISSION

New street closing rules could force community events to new locations

■ This year's veterans program and migrant worker welcome festival will not be affected by the change, but future events might be.

By Andy Rogers
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ADRIAN — City commissioners on Monday adopted a street closure policy that may force community events to other areas of Adrian next year.

The policy will not affect two events already planned for next month. The Hispanics of Lenawee Alliance (HOLA) migrant worker welcome festival will proceed on July 30 and the VFW Ladies Auxiliary's annual veterans recognition program slated for July 29 will be able to close streets this year, but could be forced into the city's parks system in the future. Both events were allowed to proceed this year because of the planning the groups have already done for their events.

Representatives from both HOLA and the VFW Auxiliary asked commissioners Monday not to move on a previously proposed policy that would have not allowed either group to close streets for their respective events this year, or in the future. Instead, commissioners adopted a new policy drafted by Adrian Police Chief Terry Collins.

The new policy requires that event planners try to use city parks instead of closing streets whenever possible, but does not altogether prohibit the closing of streets.

Terms of the policy include:

■ Organizers must provide the city with a street closure application 45 days in advance of the event.

■ Parking at the event cannot interfere with normal traffic flow, hinder emergency vehicle access or block fire hydrants.

■ The event must provide its own security personnel.

■ Alcohol may not be dispensed or consumed on any city street without the proper permits.

■ Coordinators must notify residents in the area affected by the street party in writing at least one week before the day of the event.

■ Compliance with the city's noise ordinance is mandatory and no speaker equipment can be placed within 25 feet of a resident's property without permission.

■ Event organizers must clean the area of litter and debris after the event.

■ Event organizers must comply with any other special requests made by the city.

Please see **STREETS,** page **A7**

Streets

Continued from page A1

Collins said the city gets between six and eight requests for street closures each year.

The new policy was developed after a meeting with city safety officials, administration, the engineering department and HOLA representatives.

The city has not previously had a policy controlling street closures. The issue was discussed at length at the commission's June 5 meeting after HOLA asked for streets near the Dos Hermanos market to be closed for its second annual migrant festival. Several residents in the area addressed the commission in May, asking that the group not be allowed to hold its party, saying that it caused too much of a disruption in the neighborhood last year.

"We looked at all those issues and we tried to come up with a plan," Adrian City Administrator Dane Nelson told the commission Monday. The biggest problems, according to citizens, were parking and noise.

Brenda Schug, who organized the VFW Ladies Auxiliary veteran recognition program, said the event cannot move to a city park because it depends on the VFW building's facilities. The VFW building is not large enough to contain the entire event, however, so it is likely to spread to a public area across the street, too.

"I know our party is going to happen and I just can't see how it's going to be safer by not closing the street," she told the commission before it voted on the new policy.

Charlie Ojeda, representing HOLA at Monday's meeting, told the board his group will comply with any city demands to keep the migrant festival in the neighborhood around Dos Hermanos — the area of the city where he said the migrant workers are most comfortable.

"I think we've tried to do everything that you folks have asked and recommended," Ojeda told the commission. He said that perhaps next year the group could consider moving the celebration to a city park.

The commission voted 6-1 to adopt the street closure policy. Commissioner Mike Clegg cast the lone dissenting vote.

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